

CalFresh

(Formerly known as Food Stamps)



What is CalFresh?

CalFresh is a nutrition assistance program that helps low-income families and individuals purchase nutritious, healthy food. It is the Nation's first line of defense against hunger and the cornerstone of all Federal Nutrition Assistance programs.



CalFresh Myths

Some common myths regarding CalFresh:

You cannot receive CalFresh if you own your home –

You can own or buy a home and be eligible to CalFresh. CalFresh does not require you to sign away your home.

You cannot get CalFresh if you have a job –

Individuals may work and have income low enough to receive CalFresh benefits. In fact, one-fourth of CalFresh benefits go to households with earnings.

CalFresh is welfare –

CalFresh is a nutrition assistance program. It helps low income individuals, families and seniors buy nutritious food.

You have to be a U.S. citizen to get CalFresh –

Legal immigrants can get CalFresh if they meet eligibility factors. If you are an eligible immigrant you may qualify.

Receiving CalFresh benefits will affect your chances of becoming a United States (US) citizen –

Receiving CalFresh benefits will not affect your chances of becoming a US citizen.

CalFresh Facts

The following are facts about CalFresh:

- It is a Federal program; it is not a state or county program. It is administered by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Services (FNS).
- It is not a WELFARE program; it is a nutrition program.
- It is the largest nutrition program in the United States.



CalFresh Benefits

CalFresh Helps:

Low-Income Families:

- Feed children – More than 50% of participants are children.
- Keep elderly family members independent – Participation can help improve nutritional status and well-being, and increase independence. 9% of participants are age 60 and over.

States and Local Communities:

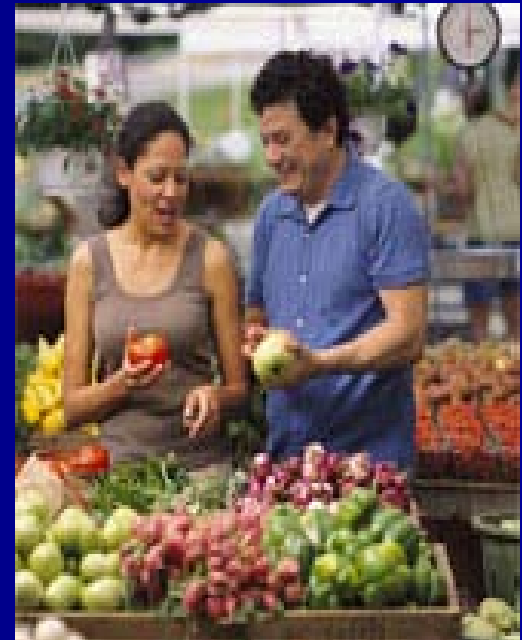
- Support local food retailers – the average monthly CalFresh benefit per household (fiscal year 2008-2009) is approximately \$325, which is spent in local grocery stores.
- Generate economic activity – Every \$5 of CalFresh benefits spent generates \$9.00 in total community spending.

Helps Businesses and Workers:

- Achieve optimal performance – Employees whose food needs are met at home may have higher productivity and take fewer sick days for themselves and their children.
- Attain self-sufficiency – CalFresh benefits supplement the food budgets of low-income workers so they can stay independent and work towards self-sufficiency.

Who is Eligible?

- Most American citizens or legal immigrants with low income can receive nutrition assistance through CalFresh. Eligibility depends on the total income and expenses of a household.
- Most CalFresh households must have a monthly gross income equal to or less than 130% of the Federal poverty guidelines, and all must have a monthly net income equal to or less than 100% of the poverty guidelines.
- CalFresh allows deductions from income such as housing costs, child support, medical expenses and dependent care costs.



Who is Not Eligible?

Persons who are:

- Receiving SSI/SSP benefits
- Undocumented individuals
- Over the income limits
- Some drug felons
- Fleeing felons
- Some college students

How and Where Do I Apply for CalFresh?

An application for CalFresh can be obtained on the internet or requested by phone, fax, mail or in person. In addition, residents of San Bernardino County can apply for CalFresh benefits online.

Download an application from the web

- Applications are available in a number of languages on the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) website at: www.cdss.ca.gov/foodstamps

Visit your local office

- Contact information for offices is available in the phone book or on county websites.
 - San Bernardino County's Transitional Assistance Departments (TAD) locations can be accessed online at: www.hss.sbcounty.gov/HSS/tad/docs/tadaddress.pdf

Apply online

- An application for benefits in San Bernardino County can be completed online at: www.C4Yourself.com

What Information Will I Need to Provide?

When you apply for CalFresh, you will need to provide the following:

- Applicant's Identification
 - Identification card or Drivers License
 - Legal Permanent Residency card
 - Naturalization Certificate
 - Passport
 - Birth Certificate
- Social Security card or number for everyone requesting assistance
- Proof of any income coming into your household
 - Employment
 - Unemployment
 - Disability
 - Child Support



What Happens During an Interview?

An Eligibility Worker (EW) will:

- Review the application – The more information you include on the application, the faster the interview will be.
- Determine household concept – Who eats and prepares meals together.
- Verify residency – Apply within the County of San Bernardino.
- Review income – Earned income and unearned income (Social Security, unemployment, disability, child/spousal support, etc.).
- Review deductions – Housing, utilities, dependent care, child support, etc.

Eligible?

- If you are not eligible to CalFresh, you will receive a Notice of Action explaining why; this notice has information on the back explaining what to do if you do not agree with the county's decision.
- If you are eligible, you will receive a Notice of Action regarding your eligibility. You will be given an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card and select a Personal Identification Number (PIN); coupons are no longer used. The EBT card can be used at thousands of markets in San Bernardino County to purchase nutritious and healthy food.



Application Timeframe

- Customers who are approved for CalFresh benefits receive their EBT card, on average, within 30 days of applying.
- A Customer can request his/her application processed as Expedited Service (ES) when applying for CalFresh. Applications that meet ES qualifications are to be processed and have benefits issued within three (3) working days.

What Can I Purchase with CalFresh?

- Food for the household to eat, such as:
 - Breads and cereal
 - Fruits and vegetables
 - Meat, fish, and poultry
 - Dairy products
 - Other non-taxable food items
- Seeds and plants which produce food for the household to eat

What Cannot be Purchased with CalFresh?

- Non-food items, such as:
 - Soaps, paper products, personal hygiene items
 - Household supplies
 - Pet food
 - Vitamins and medicine
- Hot food items (taxable)
- Beer, wine, and liquor
- Cigarettes and other tobacco products

Conclusion

- CalFresh is a food and nutrition program; *it is not a welfare program.*
- CalFresh benefits support productivity, promote healthy individuals, and prevent hunger.

